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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

1 May 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL ESTIMATES BOARD

VIA: Chief, Estimates Staff

FROM: [REDACTED] Task Team Chairman, NIE-36, Burma
25X1A9a

SUBJECT: Priority of NIE-36

1. In NIE-20, which explored the implications for mainland Southeast Asia of a Communist victory in Indochina, it was pointed out that there were in Burma insurgent forces potentially capable of overthrowing the government and that either substantial outside aid for those insurgents or direct Chinese Communist attack would topple the present Burmese regime. Thus, in a National Intelligence Estimate published but six weeks ago, we recorded the existence of serious threats to the Burmese Government and estimated the probable consequences of a materialization of those threats.

2. The IAC Watch Committee has not reported in recent weeks any serious indications that those potential threats are materializing.

3. The bases for the State Department's request for an NIE on an urgent priority were (a) reports of Chinese aid to the insurgents, (b) reports of coordinated insurgent operations and (c) the existence of conditions which the Chinese Communists could use as a pretext for intervention. Even if those reports should prove to be true upon careful evaluation, the conditions which could be used as a pretext for Chinese Communist intervention have existed for some time, and in any event the limited Chinese Communist assistance to the insurgents now alleged to exist does not pose a serious immediate threat to Burma for the following reasons:

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- ~~(S) INFORMATION~~
- (a) It will take some time before the effect of such aid can be felt in large-scale insurgent operations,
 - (b) Logistical problems and the terrain of northern and eastern Burma would limit an advance against government-controlled central Burma to slow stages and in small force, and
 - (c) the rainy season from May to October will prohibit large-scale military operations.

4. It is therefore recommended that the priority of NIE-36 be reduced to routine, in order to permit the agencies to make a careful canvas of available evidence and to permit thoughtful examination of the factors involved.

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